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A
LETTER
FROM A
Dissenter in the City,
TO HIS
Country-Friend.

WHEREIN
Moderation and Occasional Conformity

ARE
Vindicated, the PLOT of the *Occasional-Bill-*
Men against TOLERATION is Discover'd ;
and all the TREASONABLE DESIGNS of the
TACKERS are Expos'd to Common View.

L O N D O N :

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S I R,

IT comes into my Mind, that once upon a Time, when our good Fathers sent some very notable Propositions of Peace to *Charles the First* : And he was privately told, That a Refusal of the same was as much as his Life was worth ; He stubbornly made answer in these words, *I have done what I cou'd. to bring my Conscience to a Compliance with them, but I cannot do it, and I will not lose my Conscience to save my Life.*

They are, Dear Sir, They are a like; *Stiff Uncomplying Consciences*, that are now the Occasions of all our Troubles; and 'tis wondrous strange, some of these sorts of *Consciences* have crept in among our selves, and

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have given rise to that Heart-breaking Division of us the *Dissenters*, into *Consciencious* Dissenters and *Politick* Ones.

At the Head of the Consciencious Gang, is our most Notorious Brother *D' Foe*, who has been as Satyrical against our Halting and Complying Consciences, as any *High Church-Man*, or the *most Furious Jacobite*. Yea, He has said the Saddest Things of our *Occasional Conformity*. *Oh tell it not in Gath, &c.*

And yet truly, Sir, This kind of *Moderation*, This *Halting between Opinions*, is what our Fathers did in their Time declare against. I remember, that in the *Solemn League and Covenant* it self, an *Indifferency* or *Neutrality* in the Cause, is called *detestable*, and is *protested against*. And in the *Declaration of England and Scotland*, soon after that Covenant, They gave publick Notice, that *all who rested upon their Neutrality, and pleas'd themselves with the Naughty and Slothful Pretext of Indifferency, should be declared Publick Enemies to their Religion and Country, and censur'd and punish'd as profest Adversaries.*

But Sir, Then was then, and Now is now ; Our Fathers had then the Reins in their own Hands, and therefore there cou'd be no such silly thing as *Moderation* then. All was then *detestable Indifferency, Naughty and Slothful Neutrality*. And so it is with our Brethren, between us and the North Pole, at this Day ; who whilst they are, as they are, (*Masters*) will never endure *Moderation*, They will as soon eat Pork. But the Case is otherwise with us, and whilst we are as we are, we must be content to make a *Tool of Moderation*. We can only promise, That when our Day shall come, we will find *another Word* for it : And to our no small Comfort, a Noble Lord has told us, That *What has been, may be.*

Sir,

Sir, By this Seasonable Word *Moderation*, we have won the Hearts of all the soft and good-natur'd Gentlemen of the whole *Low Church*. Yea, and of our own *Consciencious* Brethren too, who have now wip'd their Mouths with *Moderation*, as the Foul-mouth'd *D' Foe* himself has. But

In the Enemies Quarters there are about *One Hundred Thirty and Four*, who remain still *Moderation-proof*, I have made a *Black List* of them, They are indefatigable Enemies to *Occasional Communion for the sake of Preference*; and we cannot perswade them, that such bare-fac'd and bold Hypocrisy shou'd be Tolerated, no not in the Name of *Moderation*.

I heard *one of them* playing the Wag with a merry Similitude of our good *L—— C——*. Who compares the *Occasional Conformist* to a *Wooden Leg, which is not knit to the Body by any Natural Ligaments, but is ty'd on, and taken off at Pleasure*. Good Sir, spare the Old Gentleman for his unlucky Comparison, because I can assure you, that he has eaten his Words as heartily, as ever he eat *Black-pudding*, at which he is an *Epicure*. Yea, even when He is *not very Well*, but only pretty *Well, indifferent-Well, so and so, &c.*

Another of the 134 (Oh for some happy Invention, to make it the Number of the Beast in the *Revelations*! Another of them, I say) was speaking of a Certain General leading his Army to Battle, who being told by an *Augur*, that such a Bird Chirping in a Tree before him, foretold his Ruine; immediately shot the Bird, and wisely inferr'd, that as it cou'd not foresee its own Fall, it cou'd be no Prophet to him. And then said the Story-teller, just so Prophetical was a Certain Old Black-Bird that sung the Fate of Kings and People, and yet cou'd not foresee his own hard Destiny, to be Caught in *Packington's Pound*. And now, said He, so little Honour

nour has the Prophetical Songster in his own Element, that his younger Brethren and Sons deny it to be any part of their Fraternal or Filial Obedience *to sing to his Tune*. Oh these *Uncanonical Junior Black-Birds*! Who at the Command of the *Royal Eagle*, to Chuse a *Parliament of Birds*, will not be so civil as to Vote for the *Birds of Prey* to represent them, tho' the *Old Cock-Black-Bird* has gravely told them, that their *Canonical Oath* obliges them to do so, when he peremptorily commands it. Sir, Tho' I heard all this, and held my Tongue, yet thought I, within my self, How happy shou'd we be, might the *Old Bird* prevail, and *his whole Nest of Birds* become obedient *Felons of themselves*, and save us the Labour.

Another of the 134 (you have his Name in my *Black-List*) had turn'd down about an Hundred Leaves in a Certain *Occasional Book*, call'd *A Friendly Debate*. In which he had thumb'd, even to Dimness, a plain Abundance of Passages, which sounded like the very Language of one of the *Highest Church-Men*. But you may believe me, that the Author of that *Old-fashion'd Book* is become a New-Man, and I can make the same Apology for him that I have already made for his Elder Brother, *viz.* That He has long since *eaten* every Word and Syllable of that whole Book, and has left his Bookseller to *Stomach* it, because he cannot easily *Digest* the Fall of its Price upon that *Occasion*. However, in Vindication of the *Occasional Author*, I can assure you, that his *Stomach* does not yet absolutely fail him, for he has lately *eaten up a Letter*, in which, being fast asleep when he writ it, he had dreamingly recommended a *Worthy High Church-Man*, as a Candidate for the next Election.

These, and such as these, are thy Friends, O *Occasional Conformity*! And they have so widen'd their
Throats

Throats with *Moderate* Swallows of this Nature, that they are in no Danger of Choaking, tho' they say *occasionally*; and upon a *New Occasion* unfay again, and so backwards and forwards *in infinitum*.

Excuse me, if I stay to tell you what I heard pretty merrily spoken by another of these 134. He was lately come from that dear *University*, where we have so many good old Friends: And he reported at a full *Club* near *Westminster*, that it was become a Modish Question in that University, Whether *The High* or *The Low* is the *True Church*. He added, that the Opponents and the Respondents were equally warm on both sides, and might have wrangl'd eternally, had they not been silenc'd by a *moderate Moderator*, who has adjourn'd the Debate for this time with an humble *Ignoramus*: And the Question is to sleep undetermin'd till a fitter *Occasion* may place it in a better Light. And in the mean time he has wisely resolv'd to write himself *Professor Re*. Which, upon *Occasion*, may stand for *Professor Regius*: Or, upon another *Occasion*, for *Professor Reipublica*.

But Sir, Another of these 134 being a little more grave and serious, had pick'd up some scatter'd Sayings of *Old Laud*, and did so Rhetorically flourish in their Commendation and Praise that I bit my Lips, because I cou'd not open them in Contradiction: The Sayings were these, *I have ever hated a Palsie in Religion.—— Let nothing be said against me but Truth, and I do here Challenge whatsoever is between Heaven and Hell to say their worst against me in point of my Religion, in which by God's Grace, I have ever hated Dissimulation.—— It can no ways become a Christian Bishop to halt with God.—— Of all Simulations, or Dissimulations, this is the basest, When a Man for poor fading temporary Ends, shall shift his Religion, or his Judgment concerning it, with the Times,*

if

if not with the Tide. [History of his Tryal, p. 224, 225, 471.]

And indeed Nothing but the like High Church Sayings against *Hypocrisy* and *Disimulation* are now to be heard among the 134, who betray themselves to have no *Palsie-Religion*, but to be fixt and steady in their Principles, as if they wou'd die *Martyrs* for them, as *Laud* himself had no more Wit than to do.

But Sir, *Laud* was no *Tom Double*. He was no *Scotch-English* ——. He never taught the brave Principles of Conquest to enslave the Nation, and Compendiously to damn all our Liberties and Properties at one Word. *The Parliament* never *Voted* any such *Book* of his to be burnt by the *Common Executioner*. He was no *Brawny Chaplain* to any *Factional Cabal*, or *Calves-Head Club*. No noisy *Busie-Body* in what concern'd him not, He writ no *P———l L———s* for *Elections* into the *H—— of C——*, in which they of the *Other House* have no *Representatives*, nor any *Right* or *Vote* to chuse any. He was never charg'd with Immoralities, was never caught by the Tail in a *Mousetrap* by any *Uncivil Intruders*. He told no Lies (according to the Proverb) with Authority; for He was no great *Traveller*. He never saw *St. Mark's Church in Venice*, in a great *Arch* whereof the *Venetians* have their *Treasury*, and wisely say, *Quantum quisque sua nummorum servat in Arcâ, tantum habet & fidei*; that is, Their Religion, and their Money are of the same Church, and they will have no more of the former than will leave room enough for the latter.

And Sir, under the *Rose* be it spoken, such perfect *Venetians* are we, the *True Politick Dissenters*; that is to say, Ours is a like *Yielding, Bending, Complying, Anythingarian Religion*, that can *Conform* or *Nonconform*, as may best suit with our *Designs and Interests*.

And

And this Looseness in Religion is indeed like the *Wooden Leg*, which the Dissembling Cripple knockt the Charitable Gentleman, fumbling in his Pocket for Farthings, down withal; and then took his Purse. It is, in short, the Craft by which we carry on all our present Intrigues, and it behoves us to maintain it against all Opposers, and more especially against the 134 aforesaid.

And I must here admonish you, that our *Occasional Conformity* has now worn the *Mask of Moderation* threadbare, and thin, that it begins to be seen thro'.

Our Queen has very handsomly expos'd it in her late Speech to the Parliament, in which She advises Her Subjects, to carry themselves in the ensuing Elections with the greatest Prudence and Moderation.

This is indeed a very fair Warning to some People, that in this Critical Juncture they shou'd look to themselves, and not be coaks'd and cully'd with fine words, but take great Care that they be prudent and moderate; that is, that they be not bubbld and fool'd with the specious Pretences of Moderation.

And 'tis true, When a Man is vigorously engag'd in the Defence of his House against some Mortal Enemies that have besieg'd it, shou'd they speak fair to him and say prettily, Pray be not so immoderately Brave to keep us out: 'Tis a stormy Season; and we wou'd gladly be shelter'd under your Roof, and therefore we beseech you to open the Door to us upon this *Occasion*, and your *Moderation* shall be known unto all Men.

In such a Case as this, *Moderation* must be Confest to be all Jeer and Banter, and a prudent Man will never be lur'd with such Wheedling Cant, will never open the Door to such Hypocritical Pretenders to Moderation,

will never *Vote them into the House*, who will be sure to spoil and plunder it, and not spare the very richest Jewel, *Religion* it self.

And thus, to prevent such Mischiefs as these, Our Wife Queen has but too seasonably recommended *the greatest Prudence* with Moderation.

And elsewhere She has made known Her Mind, and *entirely English Heart*, with such Perspicuity as cannot possibly be hid. She has solemnly declar'd over and over again, that Her Darlings and Favourites are such Members of the *Church of England*, as distinguish themselves in the Defence and Support of it, and in their unwearied Endeavours, to transmit it securely settled to Posterity.

For this She has so frequently pass'd Her Royal Word, that we can have no such Thought, as that She will ever forfeit Her Just Claim and Title to that Celebrated *Motto*, of *Semper Eadem*.

But more particularly, In Her Speech to the Parliament, May 25. 1702. are these Expressions, *My own Principles must always keep me entirely firm to the Interest and Religion of the Church of England, and will incline me to Countenance those who have the truest Zeal to support it.*

In Her Answer to the Lords Address, Decemb. 20. 1703. She has these Words, *My Zeal shall never be wanting to Establish the Church of England—— to all Posterity.*

In Her Answer to the Commons Address, Feb. 11. 1703. She is pleased to say, *I am glad to find my Message has been so acceptable to you, I hope you will effectually improve it to the Advantage of the Church as by Law Establish'd, for which no Body can have a more true and real Concern than my self.*

In Her Answer to the Address of the Arch Bishops, &c. in Convocation, Feb. 15. 1703. I am glad, says She, that what I have signified to the House of Commons in order to the better Support of the Poor Clergy of the Church of England, is so well understood and received by them. And I take this Opportunity again to assure you, that I will always continue to protect the Church of England, as by Law Establish'd.

I cou'd add to these many other the like Favourable Speeches, in which Her Majesty was pleased to continue the same Strain of Expression, till She had just Reason to conclude, that She had left no Place for Doubt, and consequently that there was no farther need of Repetition.

And truly, After so many Convincing Testimonies, We cannot now wonder, that Her Majesties continued Care of the Church of England should be such, as to caution all her Friends against all the Delusions of Moderation, by awakening their greatest Prudence to temper and govern it.

Well! But tho' Prudence sees thro' the Mask of Moderation, yet we must not for all this, leave our Occasional Conformity bare-fac'd: But we must contrive a more Formidable Vizor for it.

I think it Seasonable, at this Time, to clap our Toleration upon the Face of it, and then to cry out, that the Bill against Occasional Conformity was against our Toleration it self.

And thus shall we alarm the Quakers and the Anabaptists, and the whole Separation into loud Cries against it; for when our Uling Dog Batic opens, all the other Whelps and Currs do follow the Cry with full Mouth. And I can assure you, that we had need do something to secure the Quakers and Anabaptists Voices to us.

For

Some of the Quakers do still remember how unmercifully they were whipt and spurr'd when our Fathers were on the Saddle, and we can never hope to be mounted by their Help, unless we makē *Toleration* the Horsing-Block.

Neither can we with any great Hope or Confidence rely upon the Anabaptists. I have been very jealous of these base saucy Fellows ever since I saw their Address to *Charles the Second*, a little before his *Restoration*. The Devil himself can hardly be painted Blacker than they have drawn our *St. Oliver* in that Address. Say they there,

We have been cheated, consen'd, and betray'd by that Grand Impostor; that Loathsome Hypocrite, that Detestable Traytor, that Prodigy of Nature, that Opprobrium of Mankind, that Landskip of Iniquity, that Sink of Sin, and that Compendium of Baseness call'd Protector.

Sir, We must never trust to the poison'd *Hearts* of such inwardly unwasht Baptists, all our Business with them must be, to secure their *Hands* and their *Tongues* on our sides: And to this End we must conjure up some Bugbears and Mormo's, that is (as I said before) we must boldly tell them, that our *Toleration* is at Stake, and that the 134 have a Plot against our *Liberty of Conscience*; and that therefore it behoves us to rise up as One Man to Vote them out of the next Parliament.

Tho' I must needs say, That the *Occasional Bill* wou'd have been the greatest Confirmation of our *Toleration* that we cou'd have wish'd for. I have lately read it, and with my own Eyes I saw these Words in it, That *an Indulgence to Consciences truly Scrupulous, is agreeable*

to the Christian Religion, and particularly to the Doctrine of the Church of England, and that the Toleration Act ought therefore inviolably to be preserv'd. So that the Preservation of the Toleration, and not the Destruction of it, is manifestly the Design of the Promoters of that Bill.

This, Good Sir, is the real Truth of the Matter ; but Truth is not to be spoken at all Times. No, No, we must now bear it down with Noise and Din, and be constant in our Story, tho' we defy Constancy in Religion.

And we must not yet give over, but that we may worry and Mobb-bait these 134. We must now dress them up, and disguise them in Bear-Skins. Well ! But how must we do this ? Hark, you Sir, 'Tis just now whisper'd in my Ear, by a certain Friend at my Elbow, that we must call them *TACKERS*.

'Tis a New Old Word, and is not now so familiar to the Common People, but we may perhaps conjure up their Fears and their Jealousies with it.

Onely my own Fear is, lest the Plow-Man and the Farmer shou'd tattle in their Neighbourhoods ; for they must needs have been told, that to the great advance of their Markets, *The Bounty-Money upon Exportation of Corn* (*Viz.* Five Shillings for a Quarter of Wheat, &c.) was obtain'd by a *Tack*, and that it cou'd not otherwise have been then obtain'd.

I have another Fear, lest some of the 134 shou'd make a long *Row* or *Catalogue*, or rather long *List of Laws in Favour of the Subject*, which were all *Tacks*, yea and *Tacks* to *Money-Bills* too. I cou'd make such a *List* myself as long as my *Black List* ; but I hope, I shall have more Grace than to do so.

Quid pro quo was never, till now, thought any Harm to the Subject, who have always put up such Injuries as to have *some Security for their Money*. I mean, to have their *Liberties secur'd*, or their *Properties secur'd*, or their *Lives secur'd*, or above all, to have *their Religion and their Church secur'd*.

Such *Tacks* as these are as Antient as our Parliaments are; and from Age to Age they have been made and applauded upon all just Occasions, and even in *Times of War*, never thought *unseasonable*.

And in serious Earnest, Tho' we may not, yet our Posterity may have need enough of them, and may be tempted to Curse us, if we so cut off the Entail, as to give away from them for ever this *good Old English Security by Tacking*.

The best things indeed may be abus'd; as in the last Age, this very good *Privilege of Redressing Grievances, and making good Terms with the Crown*, was so abus'd by our Dear Fathers, as to bring an ill Report upon it; insomuch, that *Charles the First*, in a Speech to our Fathers in Parliament Assembled, has these Angry Words, *If several Matters shall ever again be Tacked together in one Bill, that Bill shall certainly be lost, let the Importance of it be never so great*.

But 'tis no Matter for that: That King was no Friend to our Interest, and therefore all was then well enough, when *Tacking* was the most abus'd, to promote the *good Old Cause*.

But Sir, our Business is, we must not suffer so much as the *Lawful Use* of it against our selves, but we must cry *Fire! Fire!* Or, that the *French* are upon us, or that all the Thousands pusht into the *Danube* are now safely Landed in the *Lobby*. But

Pray,

Pray, Mistake me not, I wou'd not have *all Tacking* to be cry'd down without any Difference or Distinction; for (you must be silent here) we are waiting and expecting a Time when it may come to our Turns to *Tack*, that is, Whensoever we may have a prevailing Party in the *House of Commons*, we have an Old Game to play: And perhaps it may then be necessary for us to *Tack against the Crown*, as much as ever our Fathers did before us.

And therefore, It is not *Tacking against the Crown*, but *Tacking against the Lords*, that we are now to quarrel with: Oh by no means, we must not suffer our best Friends to be *Tack'd* upon. And this nice Distinction will be our future Refuge, if ever the long'd-for Opportunity of *Tacking with the Crown* may be thought expedient and practicable.

Yes; and we must further distinguish, that it is but *Tacking against the Lords*, as they are our *Friends*, that we now condemn: So that we are still at Liberty to *Tack* about again, and hereafter to *Tack against them* too, shou'd they become our *Enemies*. In short,

The One thing necessary is this, We must rail against the *present Tackers*, but yet so as to save our selves the *Right of Tacking*, when it may promote our own Cause. As our Noble Friends and Patriots themselves have avowedly done thro' the whole Progress of this Matter.

I will only add, That in our Railery against the 134 *Tackers*, we must use some little Caution; for I must here inform you, that (*Veneris 2. Die Martii, 1704.*) it was thus resolved in the *House of Commons*.

Resolved,

That to Asperse any Member of the *House of Commons* with being in the Interest of the Pretended Prince of *Wales*, or the *French* Government, for or in respect of his

his Behaviour and Proceeding in the *House of Commons*, is Villanous, and Seditious, Destructive of the Liberties of Parliament, and the Freedom of Elections, and tends to create a Misunderstanding between Her Majesty and Her Subjects.

Good Sir, Let us be merry and wise, yes ; and let us have Wit in our Anger too. And so wishing good Speed to our next Elections, I conclude for this time,

S I R,

Your Humble Servant.

Just now is PUBLISHED,

A Letter from a Member of Parliament to his Friend in the Country. Giving a short Account of the Proceedings of the TACKERS, upon the Occasional and Self-denying Bills, the Act of Security in *Scotland*, and other Occurrences in the last Session of Parliament. To be Sold by the Booksellers of *London* and *Westminster*, 1705.

